
Book Reviews

Comprehensive Respiratory Care

D. R. DANTZER, N. R. MACINTYRE AND E. D. BAKOW

Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Company, 1995, 1308 pages, £45.00.

Comprehensive Respiratory Care should be a useful textbook, not only for pulmonologists but also for intensive care unit and internal medicine practitioners. In five sections grouped in a single volume, it combines explanations on the anatomical and physiological basis of respiration and lung diseases, description of diagnostic techniques with their respective fundamental basis and yields, details on instrumental treatments and physiotherapy, a comprehensive review of virtually all respiratory clinical problems, and an interesting section on management in respiratory medicine, quality management, ethics and legal aspects, education, and research methodology and statistics.

Specific aspects of home and pre-hospital care are addressed as well as paediatric and neonatal specificities in respiratory and critical care medicine. Also of interest is that addressed clinical problems are not limited to 'pure' respiratory medicine, but also include various critical care medicine topics such as myocardial ischaemia, gastrointestinal emergencies, acute renal failure, trauma and poisoning. Similarly, diagnostic techniques focus not only on thoracic imaging techniques, haemodynamic monitoring, pulmonary function tests and arterial blood gases but also on EKG, laboratory examinations (blood count, electrolytes, enzymes), and neurologic monitoring.

Thereby, this textbook provides practical information on most aspects of the care of patients with respiratory diseases, from home to the intensive care unit, including ethical, legal, management and research aspects, with many useful tables and figures.

G. J. Huchon

Occupational lung disease

W. K. C. MORGAN AND A. SEATON

Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders & Company, 1995, 657 pages, £62.00.

This is the third edition of an established textbook in occupational lung diseases. It is 11 yr since the previous edition. The page size is a little bit bigger, but the book is no longer. Nineteen of the 24 chapters are still written by one of the principal authors, who are both heavyweights, particularly in the pneumoconioses. They continue to have divergent views on a number of issues; unfortunately their disagreements are in separate chapters rather than put together as a constructive discussion. For instance, relating to silica and carcinogenicity, one of the authors disagrees with most of the conclusions of the other (p. 636). There is no harm in disagreement, but the disagreements are not handled very well. There has been an interesting change in who has written which chapter. The Scottish chapters are definitely better than the last edition, and include the chapter on coal workers and pneumoconiosis which I thought was particularly good. The book is written for clinicians, rather than those who are having to control diseases; the sections on prevention and surveillance are less good than the sections on pathology and clinical manifestations. The book has a somewhat dated feel both in its layout (many of the pages are very black with a very narrow central margin and a very wide outer margin giving an oppressive feel) and the lack of high resolution CTs and bronchoalveolar lavage results. Personally, I am not sure why books of this sort have one-third of the space taken up with basic mechanisms which I think are best dealt with in more specialist books. The strengths of this book are in the description and controversies in the pneumoconioses — it should be read by all those caring for patients with exposures to such agents. The book also tackles some of the subjects poorly covered in other competitor books, particularly occupational bronchitis, occupational respiratory infections and occupational lung cancer. It should be in your library.

P. Sherwood Burge